Government Study Committee Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2015 6:30PM, Meeting Room 1
Town Offices, 25 Bryants Lane
Tyngsborough, Massachusetts

DRAFT

Members Present: Karyn Puleo, Jacqueline Schnackertz, Donald Lampron, Diana Keohane, Robert Mercier, Linda Bown, Robert Jackson.
Absent: Paula Derby and Burt Buchman
Staff Present: Curt Bellavance, Town Administrator and Charles Zaroulis, Town Counsel

6:30 PM
The meeting was called to order and the agenda read by Member Karyn Puleo.

1. The Minutes of April 9, 2015
   Minutes just for review/no action.

2. Review of Possible Actions
Member Puleo, hope everyone had an opportunity to review the meeting from last fall, we had a MMA Representative explain the charter process. If we are looking at a nine member commission, for Tyngsborough the commission would probably need 50 signatures to place an article on the town meeting warrant. Member Keohane, if the population is between 0-11,999 the article would require 25 signatures. Town Counsel verified that if less than 12k, yes then it would be 25 signatures but is not sure if it would need to be at an annual election. Member Puleo, asked Town Counsel, if we wanted to move forward, what would be needed? Town Counsel, that depends on a Charter or Special Act, which is more flexible. Need a 3-year period from beginning to end for a charter commission change. If the Board of Selectmen take on the charge to explore the possibility of change, the Board would be giving its authority, not making a "power grab" but just the opposite. A Charter creates a town manager form of government which takes away much of the Board of Selectmen's powers. Whereas a Special Act goes to town meeting. Then to ballot for final approval. Discussion ensued over how the process works. Finally, a Charter goes to the ballot and also the Special Act. Town Counsel reiterated that to have a town manager form of government you either need a Charter Commission or the Special Act.

Member Mercier discussed the town of Plainville, MA process, Plainville created 3 special acts. (DPW, TA-TM position, eliminate the Treasurer/Collector). Member Jackson, so it comes down to 3 different options and I think everyone here supports moving forward, but which option, we need a flow chat to see the changes that are going to happen. Member Puleo, yes we would need a flow chart that shows us what we're working towards. Member Mercier, the Town of Plymouth had 3 MMA reps speak before the town to answer questions (TM, TA, weak TA). The four options are 1) Special Act, 2) Legislation, 3) Charter, and 4) Do nothing.
Town Counsel commented, it is a way to improve our government. Member Keohane, exploring our future and having a forum is important. Town Counsel, MMA may have a facilitator that runs this type of meeting. Member Puleo asked what do we do to get the forum? Member Schnackertz, mentioned that Clark University has something on MMA (5/2010, A study in Government). Member Lampron, likes the idea of the flow chart. Member Jackson we should pick a pathway and

show the people why this is the way we should proceed. Member Puleo, maybe we can prepare some timelines. We should have one or more forums prior to a Charter Commission decision. Member Mercier, we need to solicit what residents want, if anything. Member Keohane, maybe we use another administrator to describe the differences and what makes it difficult. Member Lampron, possibly use students that are in government classes.   With nothing further to discuss the Commission set their next meeting to Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at 6:45 PM with the possibility of getting a room that has whiteboard so we can present ideas and flow a chart. Member Keohane, I will look at getting a room at the high school.

   3. Schedule Next Meeting
The GSC set the next scheduled meeting for Tuesday September 15, 2015 at 6:45 PM.

   4. Adjourn
The Committee voted 8-1 on a motion by Member Schnackertz, second by Member Jackson, to adjourn.

The Committee adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Curt Bellavance, Town Administrator   Approved on